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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Thursday, October 16, 1930.

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In 3/4h
Housekeepers' Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Shopping for Food." Talk prepared by Margaret Brislawn, Department of Home Economics, State College of Washington. Questions answered by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Home Baking."

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Yesterday I had a request from a very young housekeeper, who asked for a talk on shopping for food.

"I haven't been married very long," she writes, "and I don't know the first thing about buying food, and cooking. Isn't it a lot of work, to keep house, and plan three meals a day, and do all your own cooking?"

Of course it is. Keeping house is a big job. There are some 26,000,000 housewives in the United States, and I fancy that most of them would agree with you. Twenty-six million housewives ought to know.

Now, about buying food. Do you remember, about a year ago, when I broadcast a number of suggestions about food shopping? But of course you don't remember. You were not keeping house a year ago. Perhaps you were not even interested in buying meat and potatoes.

The talk I broadcast last year was prepared by Margaret Brislawn, in the Home Economics Department of a far western college. Miss Brislawn had some excellent ideas. Worth repeating this morning.

"The first step in buying food is planning the menu," says Miss Brislawn. "This may be for a day, or for a week. Consider your family's needs, and the foods on hand which should be used at once. List the needed foods for carrying out the menu, but do not hesitate to substitute for them similar foods which you may find cheaper at the store. Then decide on the amount needed, taking care not to overstock, in perishables. Plan to have fruits and vegetables in season, as they will be cheaper. Know something of the waste to be expected.

"Always arrange to have on hand certain staples, so that there will be no borrowing from the neighbors, or hurried trips to the store. Check up on these supplies each week, and renew before the supply runs too low. Here is a suggested list, but of course each housekeeper should vary it, to suit her own needs. In the ice box, keep: bacon, butter, cheese, eggs, cooking fat, and salad oil. In the vegetable cupboard, keep: carrots, onions, cabbage, potatoes, apples, lemons, and oranges. On the supply shelves, keep such cereal foods as breakfast cereals, crackers, macaroni, rice, cornmeal, flour, and cornstarch.

1. The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding the current status of the project and the progress made to date. The information is intended for the use of the project manager and the project team.

2. The project is currently in the planning phase. The project manager has identified the key tasks and the resources required to complete the project. The project team has been assigned to the tasks and is working to complete them as quickly as possible.

3. The project is currently on schedule. The project manager has identified the key tasks and the resources required to complete the project. The project team has been assigned to the tasks and is working to complete them as quickly as possible.

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For general cooking, have dried beans, chocolate, raisins, dates, gelatin, molasses, granulated, brown, and powdered sugar, tapioca, baking powder, soda, spices, and vinegar. For beverages, keep coffee, tea, and cocoa. It may seem costly to lay in all these supplies, if you do not now have them, but you will find it no more expensive in the long run, and much more satisfactory.

"When the list is fully prepared, give your order, either by telephone or in person, to the grocer. Telephone orders for goods which need no inspection save time for both grocer and housewife, but care must be taken to give definite brands, or specify exact requirements in ordering. However, one should make regular visits to the store, to purchase fruits and vegetables, and to keep in touch with the grocer and the market. Give the order early in the morning, and plan for only one delivery.

"Select your grocery. An honest reliable dealer will pay in the long run, though another seems to offer lower prices. One need not limit food buying to one store, but better service is usually given where one is a regular customer, and her needs and tastes are known. Select a grocery where conditions are sanitary, and employees are cleanly, but do not demand elaborate service and costly store fixtures. If your income is moderate, make up your mind to put all your money into food value, and avoid paying for expensive service.

"At the store, be business-like. You can save money for yourself and the grocer, in the following ways: Ask the price before buying. Ask for definite weights and measures. A wise buyer never asks for 'fifty cents worth of this,' or 'twenty-five cents worth of that.'

"Ask for definite sizes of canned goods, as No. 2 cans of corn, or No. 1 cans of pineapple. Buy by grades, where goods are standardized, as 40-50 prunes. Watch the scales. Compute amounts for yourself, as anyone is likely to make mistakes. Read labels on packages, for quantities and ingredients. Buy in bulk rather than packages, where sanitary conditions permit. Buy staples and canned goods in as large quantities as you can store and use economically. The very small container should be avoided. In a study made recently, it was found that \$2.94 was saved in one afternoon's shopping for eleven staple articles, by choosing the larger container in each case.

"Give your grocer the written list of staples, so that he can put them up while you are looking over fruits and vegetables. Choose your own fruits and vegetables, but do not handle them unnecessarily. Keep in mind the story of the Italian fruit vendor, who, growing tired of having people squeeze and bruise his wares, put up the following sign: 'If you must pincha da fruit, pincha da coconut.'

"You can help your grocer and yourself by shopping early, never in rush hours; buying staples on days other than Saturday, which is his busiest day; buying as quickly as possible; not asking him to keep open in the evenings; checking over all goods received and reporting any errors at once; not asking special favors, as extra deliveries; and by paying all bills promptly when due."

That's all of Miss Brislawn's talk. I liked especially her suggestion

about giving the grocer a written list of staples, so that he can put those up, while you select your fruits and vegetables. It must be very trying to a grocer, to have his women customers read off a list of staples, in an order which makes him retrace his steps all over the store.

We have time to answer a question or two this morning, before the closing bell rings.

First question: "Do you have a recipe for griddle cakes, made with graham flour?"

Answer: In the baking bulletin, "Home Baking," you will find a recipe for griddle cakes. Graham flour may be substituted for part of the sifted soft wheat flour. I would not, however, advise using all graham flour in pancakes, because they might be too tender to turn easily. Graham flour, of course, does not have so much gluten in it as white flour, and therefore makes a less elastic batter or dough.

Second question: "How can I make a pie crust which will not sink down into the pan, when baking?"

Answer: In baking pastry shells, let the dough extend well over the edge of the pie pan, instead of trimming it off close. Then when it shrinks during baking, it will not creep down the side of the pan.

One more question: "Do you have a recipe for ice-box cookies?"

Answer: I am sending you a copy of the baking bulletin, which contains recipes for cookies. Practically any kind of a stiff cookie dough may be rolled up, wrapped in wax paper, put in the ice box or in a cold place for several hours, and then cut into thin slices and baked. Any kind of cookies made in this way might be called ice-box cookies. This is a very easy way to make cookies because it saves all the trouble of rolling out and cutting on a board.

And that's all, till tomorrow. Please be ready to write a Sunday menu tomorrow -- chicken and everything.

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